

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 L-03 SCS-03
PPT-01 SCA-01 AID-05 PC-01 CPR-01 USIA-06 EB-07
H-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SY-05 OPR-02
/099 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W:BSKIRKPATRICK:IW
APPROVED BY AF:TWSEELYE
AF/I:LSHURTLEFF (INFO)
D/HA:MBOVA (INFO)
L/SCA:RDALTON (INFO)
L/M:HSHAMWELL (INFO)
SCA/SCS:EPOWERS (INFO)
SCA/SCS:NPELLETREAU (INFO)
PPT/L:MWYMAN (INFO)
AID/AFR/SFWA:GMACARTHUR (INFO)
PC/AF:DGRIFIS (INFO)
S/CPR:HDAVIS (INFO)
USIA/IAA:HHOLMES (INFO)
AF/EPS:DMCCLELLAND (INFO)
EB/IFD/ODF:FTHOMAS (INFO)
-----141642Z 003494 /73
P 132044Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LOME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109281

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, CASC, SHUM, DM, US
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SUBJECT:DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR BOYA - PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BENIN

1. AMBASSADOR BOYA RESPONDED TO AN INVITATION TO CALL ON
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE ON THURSDAY MAY 12.
SEELYE NOTED THAT HE HAD THREE POINTS TO RAISE.

2. ARREST OF THOMAS NAKADA - TRAVEL ADVISORY: SEELYE NOTED THAT BENINESE AUTHORITIES HAD ARRESTED THOMAS NAKADA, AN AMERICAN VISITING BENIN FOR TOURISM. THE BENINESE AUTHORITIES FAILED TO NOTIFY OUR EMBASSY WHICH THEY SHOULD DO IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE. OUR EMBASSY LEARNED OF HIS ARREST THROUGH A THIRD PARTY AFTER FIVE DAYS. MR. NAKADA WAS HELD FOR 31 DAYS AND NOT INFORMED OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM. THE BENINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE TOLD US THAT UPON NAKADA'S RELEASE HE WAS SENT TO THE NIGERIAN BORDER AND CROSSED INTO THAT COUNTRY. WHEN OUR VICE CONSUL CHECKED THE BORDER RECORDS THERE WAS NO MENTION OF MR. NAKADA. WE ARE GREATLY CONCERNED AT HIS DISAPPEARANCE. WE ARE CONCERNED ENOUGH TO BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING ADVISING AMERICAN CITIZENS TO STAY AWAY FROM BENIN. WE DO NOT WISH TO DO THIS BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT TRAVEL BY U.S. CITIZENS HELPS TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL

UNDERSTANDING. IF THE BENINESE GOVERNMENT CAN EXPLAIN THIS SITUATION WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO ISSUE A GENERAL NOTICE TO AMERICAN CITIZENS ADVISING AGAINST TRAVEL TO BENIN.

3. INTERNAL SECURITY RESTRICTIONS: SEELYE STATED WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE GPRB IS PLANNING TO INSTITUTE RESTRICTIONS ON DIPLOMATS. BOYA REPLIED THAT SUCH RESTRICTIONS APPLIED TO ALL DIPLOMATS, NOT JUST AMERICAN DIPLOMATS. SEELYE SAID THAT THE USG WISHED TO REGISTER ITS CONCERN. IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT U.S. DIPLOMATS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL IN BENIN AS IN MOST COUNTRIES. WE HOPE THAT
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THE GPRB WILL RECONSIDER AND NOT RESTRICT MOVEMENT OF DIPLOMATS. SUCH RESTRICTIONS ARE NOT CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE. BOYA REITERATED THAT THE RESTRICTIONS WERE FOR ALL DIPLOMATS. THERE HAD EVEN BEEN COMMUNICATIONS RESTRICTIONS WHICH HE UNDERSTOOD DID NOT EXIST NOW. BOYA STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THE PRESENT RESTRICTIONS WERE ONLY PROVISIONAL AND THAT THEY RESULTED FROM THE MERCENARY ATTACK ON JANUARY 16. HE PROMISED TO NOTIFY THE GPRB OF OUR CONCERN.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS: SEELYE SAID THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION IS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN OUR RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. SEELYE NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR BOYA HAD PROBABLY SEEN SOME OF OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT. THE CONGRESS FEELS STRONGLY THAT WE SHOULD LOOK AT HUMAN RIGHTS WHEN CONSIDERING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. IN THE CASE OF IDA/WORLD BANK LOANS, WE MUST EXAMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE POTENTIAL RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS. THE IDA

WILL BE CONSIDERING LOANS FOR BENIN. WE HAVE ONLY ONE VOTE BUT MUST TAKE HUMAN RIGHTS INTO ACCOUNT. WE ABSTAINED ON IDA LOANS TO ETHIOPIA BECAUSE OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY. WE DO NOT WISH TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT ON THE BENINESE GOVERNMENT BUT WE WILL TAKE HUMAN RIGHTS INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CONSIDERING OUR VOTES ON SUCH LOANS. BOYA REPLIED THAT OUR CONCERN ABOUT MR. NAKADA AND ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS SEEMED TO BE RELATED. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN BENIN HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES. IT HAS NEVER EXECUTED ANYONE. EVEN BENINESE CONDEMNED TO DEATH HAVE NOT BEEN EXECUTED. BOYA STATED THAT THE ONLY PERSONS IN BENIN WHO ARE NOT FREE ARE THOSE WHO ARE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. HE STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DOES ITS BEST TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS. HE NOTED THAT THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES HAD BEEN BANNED BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WISHED TO PREVENT THEM FROM PREACHING AGAINST THE REGIME. CONFIDENTIAL

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WHEN ASKED WHAT THE WITNESSES SAID, BOYA REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PHILOSOPHICAL GUIDE IS MARXISM LENINISM AND THAT THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SAY SUCH AN IDEOLOGY IS ALIEN TO AFRICA.

5. SEELYE CLOSED THE CONVERSATION BY QUESTIONING AMBASSADOR BOYA ABOUT HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT THE INTERNAL SECURITY RESTRICTIONS WERE PROVISIONAL. BOYA REPLIED THAT THE RESTRICTIONS CANNOT LAST. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT RESPECTED THE RULES APPLIED BY ALL COUNTRIES. THESE MEASURES WERE EXCEPTIONAL.

CHRISTOPHER

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